

#070

Contact: □ Jeanne Silberstein, MPH, RD, Sonia Vega, Health Educator  
□ □ □ San Bernardino County Department of Public Health  
□ □ □ (909) 387-6320 or (909) 387-6864 or 387-6697

## **Pilot Project Launched Today in Colton to Address Rising Osteoporosis Rates**

September 10, 2001 --- Public health officials today launched Huesos Fuertes, Familia Saludable, a campaign designed to help prevent osteoporosis among Spanish-speaking Latino families.

"Considering California's large and growing Latino population, we felt it important to develop a bone health campaign that specifically addresses Spanish-speaking Latinos," said Jeanne Silberstein, MPH, RD of the San Bernardino County Health Department. "An English-language national campaign is currently being developed so this was a high-priority for us."

Osteoporosis is a serious disease that thins the bones and makes them brittle. Simple falls for people with osteoporosis can lead to hip, spine and wrist fractures. Up to 20 percent of those with hip fractures die within a year of their injury. One in two women and one in eight men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. While Caucasian and Asian women are more likely to develop osteoporosis, Hispanic women are still at significant risk.

Huesos Fuertes, Familia Saludable asks Latinos 2 years and over to simply drink one extra cup of 1% milk every day as a way to improve health and increase calcium consumption. Maintaining adequate calcium consumption is one of the key factors for protecting against osteoporosis. From the teen years on, most females fail to get enough calcium. Consuming one extra cup of milk each day would bring most Hispanic teen-age girls and older females nearly to their recommended calcium intake.

"Drinking one extra cup of 1% milk each day is easy to do and has great health benefits for everyone 2 years and over," said Silberstein. "The extra cup of 1% milk can be enjoyed in a licuado, in cereal, or in other recipes that include milk. Families will keep strong and healthy with the calcium in 1% milk."

Campaign sponsors are promoting 1% milk because it has all the nutrition of whole and 2% milk and a lot less fat. Huesos Fuertes, Familia Saludable will feature 1% milk tastings in licuados at local grocery stores, radio advertisements, and outreach at community events and through classes organized by local promotoras. The promotoras have been trained to lead the Huesos Fuertes, Familia Saludable educational sessions by the San Bernardino County Health Department and Great South Region of California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition), sponsors of the campaign.

For more information on osteoporosis and calcium-rich foods, call 1-800-208-9533.  
- 30 -

Huesos Fuertes, Familia Saludable Fact Sheet Contrary to popular belief, osteoporosis is not an inevitable part of aging. Osteoporosis doesn't just happen when you're 'old.' It gets started years, even decades earlier.

By about the age of 30, the average woman has acquired most of her bone mass. Building strong bones during childhood and adolescence can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis later in life. (NOF WEB SITE, 2001)

Key factors to protect against osteoporosis include consuming foods rich in calcium, engaging in regular weight-bearing exercise such as walking and resistance training such as weight-lifting, and not smoking and not consuming alcohol excessively. (NOF WEB SITE, 2001)

After menopause, women lose the protective effect that estrogen has on bone. At this stage of life, rapid bone loss can occur. However, it is never too late to take steps to slow or stop the further loss of bone. A calcium-rich diet and exercise are key strategies to help strengthen bones at any age. It is important to speak with a doctor about additional ways to keep bones strong. (NOF, WHAT IS BONE FACT SHEET)

In the United States, 21% of Non-Hispanic white women and 16% of Mexican American women 50 years and older are afflicted with osteoporosis. (NHANES III)